



MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning & Economic Development Committee
FROM: Roderick Simmons, Parks and Recreation Director
SUBJECT: Operations of the Film Festival
DATE: April 13, 2010

The Asheville Film Festival (AFF) was started in 2003 to showcase western North Carolina as a strong film location and as a film festival destination for filmmakers and visitors while celebrating the development of emerging and established artists in the filmmaking industry. At that time, Asheville was home to Blue Ridge Motion Pictures Studios and had built a strong film and arts community, including the Asheville Film Commission, the managing group of AFF under the direction of the Asheville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Art Department. Since then, the AFF has struggled to meet its responsibility as an enterprise fund and has operated at a deficit since 2004.

Year	Revenues	Expenses	Deficit
FY04	95,978	129,734	(33,756)
FY05	123,684	134,267	(10,583)
FY06	60,908	94,019	(33,111)
FY07	68,589	94,530	(25,941)
FY08	63,399	91,963	(28,564)
FY09	21,160	72,265	(51,105)

Over the past two years, staff has worked at reducing the level of subsidy. However, securing sponsorships has continued to become more challenging and the significant changes that would need to be implemented would take two to three years with no guarantee of being able to operate as an enterprise fund.

Recently, Tom Anton, Director of the Asheville Cinema Society, has asked the City of Asheville for permission to operate the Asheville Film Festival in September, 2011. Mr. Anton has participated in the Asheville Film Festival in the past and staff feels that he has an appropriate level of expertise to operate the AFF in the future.

It is staffs' recommendation that the City of Asheville not conduct the Asheville Film Festival in 2010 and allow Mr. Anton and the Asheville Cinema Society to operate the event in 2011.